The Wilcotes Monument

IN

Great Tew Church.

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BY

WILLIAM F. CARTER, B.A., Oxon.,

Of the Inner Temple, Barrister at Law.

READING:
"READING OBSERVER" OFFICE, BLAGRAVE STREET.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

A MUCH MISUNDERSTOOD MAN,

MARK PATTISON, B.D., late Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford,

I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE PAMPHLET,

REMEMBERING WITH HOW MUCH KINDNESS HE WELCOMED

ONE OF MY EARLIER HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

BRASS OF JOHN & ALICE WILCOTES

IN GREAT TEW CHURCH.

The Wilcotes Monument in Great Tew Church.

GREAT Tew is a village in the north-west of Oxfordshire, some five miles east of Chipping Norton, and nearly twice that distance south-west of Banbury. Its antiquity is undoubted, for Roman coins and pavement have been discovered on a farm in the parish; and in the old times its importance was probably greater in relation to its neighbours; for if J.L G.M. is correct in distinguishing the various Tews mentioned in Domesday Book, Great Tew was assessed at 16½ hides, while Banbury was only 50, Burford 8, Deddington 36, Thame 60, and Little Tew only 2.

Perhaps the best way of approaching Great Tew is from the high road between Woodstock and Chipping Norton, along a lane which is for much of its length an avenue of magnificent beech trees. Then comes a steep descent under arches of green-wood gothic, and a sudden turn discloses a charming village, for whose appearance the "picturesque" of the guide-book seems a quite insufficient adjective.

On the hill side, above the pretty cluster of cottages and flanked by tall trees, is the squire's mansion, with park and avenue, gardens and shrubberies, such as England only can produce. Here for a century or so the Boulton family, best known by its association with the world-famous "steam engine" Watt, has sat in the seat where the lines of Preaux, Wilcotes, Raynsford, and Cary, flourished from the wild days of John Lackland to the tempestuous reign of the first Charles.

Higher up still, hidden in trees, and all but enclosed in the squire's grounds, stands the ancient parish church, beautiful to the eye for its delicious surroundings and fine proportions, and not least because it is built of the soft-hued stone of the district, time-mellowed and be-lichened in the sunshine and showers of many a hundred years. Under a boldly-sculptured arch one enters a building of unusual architectural interest; but the history of the structure, and the how and the why of its building, must be told—as told they should be—by one versed in the intricacies and details

of ecclesiastical architecture. In the nave is the stone effigy of a cross-legged warrior, and high up above the arches are a number of hatchments displaying to the heraldically-minded the arms and lineages of by-gone Kecks and other local personages whose memory is rapidly passing into the land of forgotten things: these also, and many other memorials of the past, I must leave un-noticed.

But in the chancel are three monuments which compel and arrest attention; and though only one of them concerns the subject of these notes, a passing word may well be spared to the other two. The first is a monument placed in the south wall by the late Mr. Matthew P. W. Boulton, of Great Tew, to the memory of Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, the Royalist who fell at the battle of Newbury fighting for a king, whom in his heart he mistrusted, and calling for "peace peace" when as yet peace was neither possible, nor even desirable. He was brought home to Great Tew, and the entry of his burial in September, 1643, may still be deciphered in the Registers, but the exact spot is unknown, and there was no monument to his memory until Mr. Boulton provided this tablet which bears an extremely well worded inscription, while its heraldic adornment is both artistically tasteful, and of a style appropriate to Falkland's period.

The second of the two, the work of the inimitable Chantrey, is a delightful representation in marble of a charming and beautiful woman. It was set up by the late Mr. Matthew Robinson Boulton in 1829, to the memory of his wife; and so highly do I esteem its merits as to believe that it is deservedly placed in the same chancel with the mediæval monument of John and Alice Wilcotes. One must pause for a moment's expression of gratitude to the great modern sculptor. For three hundred years a pandemonium of of monumental horrors had been let loose in the churches and cathedrals of England. Windows, walls, and floors, bore, as they still bear, unmistakeable witness to the artistic degeneracy of the Protestant Reformation and of the so-called "Renaissance." The grotesque absurdities which deface the beauty and obscure the proportions of Westminster Abbey, the hundreds of unlovely tablets which jostle one another on the church walls of Bath, still declare with unintentional eloquence the terrible downfall of English Monumental Art from its exquisite beauty in the Plantagenets' days to its degradation under the Tudors, the Stuarts, and the House of Hanover. Like an oasis in the desert, one of Chantrey's creations will meet the eye in a wilderness of contemporary monstrosities, and

though devotional grace may be lacking, beauty of soul and of form are there, and we say our thanks accordingly.

THE WILCOTES BRASS.

I come now to the last of the three notable monuments in the chancel. It is a fine brass, well designed and executed, and the quality of the material deserves some praise, seeing that it has mostly withstood the wear and tear of well-nigh five centuries. The stone in which the brass is set measures 107 inches by 46, and is now covered by a rug, whereas before the present Vicar's time, the monument lay bare and unprotected probably from the day when it was first placed in position. A good description of the brass in proper technical terms appeared in the magazine of the Oxford University Brass-rubbing Society for May, 1898, and need not be here repeated, as our frontispiece* gives a very spirited and correct representation on a scale quite large enough to show the details, even the inscription being legible without a magnifying glass. It errs, however, in representing two shields over the man's canopy, for these have been torn away, leaving of course their traces in the stone slab. Of the three slender pinnacles forming part of the canopy, the greater part of the centre one, and the whole of that above the man's left, have been lost, but are included in the drawing, which represents them as exactly like the one which remains complete; and this was no doubt the case.

There are several interesting points about the brass, and some of these my readers may like to notice. The lady's head-dress is of the style known as "nebulé," so-called, I presume, because the edges of the frills as they front the spectator present the appearance of the lines known as nebulé in Heraldry. To the uninitiated male eye it has the appearance of a modern baby's cap. The decoration of the tilting helmet on which the man's other helmet rests, seems to have troubled some students, who have even mistaken it for a tasselled cushion; but there can be no real question that it is the usual tilting helm with checquered mantling ending in the customary tassels. The elaborate necklet or collar worn by the man, and the palettes protecting his armpits are so badly defaced that their details, which were probably very fine, have completely vanished. It is to be supposed that they were heightened with coloured enamels less enduring than the brass and more attractive to the village vandal.

* Reproduced from Boutell's "Brasses."

That there is less moustache on the left cheek than on the right, as barely indicated in the frontispiece, is doubtless due to the careless footsteps of many generations. I am very much disposed to think that certain scratches on the helmet plate just below the chin represent the beard extending over the gorget: moustaches were frequently represented in this manner, but I can recall no instance of the beard being so treated, and therefore do not press my opinion.

A toy terrier is at the lady's feet, and those of her husband rest on a coursing hound, instead of the more usual lion. If these slight variations have any cause beyond the artist's fancy, the explanation of this one might be that the squire in this instance, despite his martial attire, was a man of peaceful pursuits who had seen little or no active military service.

A few more details of the brass remain to be noticed incidentally; but I may mention that I found as I expected, that the frontispiece engraving hardly does justice to the good looks of the man. I have therefore thought it worth while to give a reproduction of my rubbing, which, for photographic reasons, Mr. Baker has touched up, but has done so with most careful accuracy, and he is in every way to be congratulated on the result.

JOHN AND ALICE WILCOTES.

There can be no doubt that the brass was placed to the memory of John Wilcotes, Esq., of Great Tew, who died 22nd May, 1422, and of Alice his wife; but as the inscription is now incomplete, it is well to place on record the exact reasons for making this statement, which are as follows:—

(1) The armour represented plainly belongs to the early part of the Fifteenth Century, and was going out of fashion about the time of the battle of Agincourt (1415). This agrees with the date of John and Alice Wilcotes, which is known from various records.

(2) The inscription shows that the lady's name was Alice.

(3) The man's arms—*An eagle displayed, with a coronet round its neck* as shown on the shields, are evidently those of Wilcotes, which were quartered afterward by his descendants the Rainsfords and Ashfields.

(4) It was recorded by Lee the Herald, in the sixteenth century, that there was a monument or window in Tew Church

JOHN WILCOTES.

[*From a rubbing, photographed by Mr. Harold Baker, of Birmingham.*]

showing the same quartered shield that appears on this brass, and "over it written John Wylcotes and Alice his wyfe ob. mcccc . . . ."

In Appendix I. I piece together the best genealogical account I can of the Wilcotes family of Great Tew, but the extraordinary wealth of the information to be discovered in our national records furnishes quite a number of interesting details concerning John Wilcotes and his children. I could give much, but that the length of these notes might afflict my readers, and the length of the printer's bill might annoy myself, for both of which good reasons I am brief.

He seems to have been a soldier of fortune in the service of Thomas, Lord Despenser, who in about 1396 granted him an annuity of £10 out of the manor of "Brodeton," Wilts, in return for which John was to serve him in war with a yeoman, a groom, and three horses. Here we touch History. It was impossible for Despenser —the son-in-law of Edward the Third's son Edmund Duke of York— to remain neutral in the struggle which placed Henry the Fourth upon the throne. Perhaps he was influenced by the memory of the ancient feud between his ancestors and the House of Lancaster, and perhaps he was genuinely attached to the unfortunate Richard, but at any rate, Despenser was one of those great nobles who a week before Christmas, 1399, conspired for the restoration of the deposed King. Despenser's brother-in-law, afterward Earl of Cambridge, betrayed the plot; the conspirators retiring to Cirencester were there imprisoned by the Mayor and inhabitants; and Despenser escaped, only to meet his death at the hands of the people of Bristol.

Wilcotes, however, did not follow Despenser's fortunes, and was evidently a trusted adherent of the Lancastrian cause. On the 18th of December, 1399, exactly when the conspiracy was come to a head, he was placed on the commission for arraying the military forces of Oxfordshire,* and in the following February his ten-pound annuity was assured to him by the Crown, in spite of the forfeiture of Despenser's estates.* In the critical year 1400, he represented Oxfordshire in Parliament, and held the office of Receiver General of the Duchy of Cornwall, in which latter capacity he received from the King a special grant of £100 for his safe conveyance of the King's money from Cornwall. Furthermore, he represented Oxfordshire in several other Parliaments in the reigns of Henry the Fourth

* Patent Rolls.

and Henry the Fifth, but in the Parliament of 1415-16 sat for the County of Kent, in conjunction with William Cheney, the brother of his second wife.

Doubtless he remained a staunch supporter of the House of Lancaster, for not only did Henry the Fifth three times appoint him High Sheriff of Berks and Oxon, but Dr. Macnamara† tells us that "in the records of the Privy Council we find John Wilcotes at Westminster in October of the year 1417, sitting in Council with the Duke of Bedford, Archbishop Chicheley, the Bishop of Durham and others; and the following year he was one of the witnesses to the will made by the King prior to his departure for the last time from England."

So much concerning his public career, and what else I have to say of him can be compressed within small compass. First, then, I find in the Calendar of Papal Registers, that in August, 1399, he as "John Wyltecotes" with Alice his wife, being of the Diocese of Lincoln, had a Papal "Indult" permitting that the confessor of their choice might grant them in the hour of death plenary remission of certain of their sins, and as to other sins, plenary remission as often as they please.

Then I find that at some uncertain date between 1404 and 1424, he was engaged in a Chancery suit concerning lands in Mollington, which is on the borders of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire.

Other dealings with his own and his wife's estates are mentioned by Dr. Macnamara, who had access to the title deeds relating to them, which are among the muniments of Oriel College, Oxford. Unfortunately, however, although the Provost kindly promised to give any assistance in his power, it seems impossible now to produce these documents, and I gather that the reference-numbers quoted by Dr. Macnamara are obliterated, or for some reason useless. This is very regrettable, as although most of its genealogical particulars are set out in my first Appendix, I had hoped to give a good abstract of John Wilcotes' Will, which should be among the College muniments, and is dated according to Dr. Macnamara, 11th April, 1422, having John Wilcotes' seal attached, which bears the eagle displayed with a coronet on the neck as in his coat of arms. More than five years later, his Inquisition post mortem was held; and the record of this

† See Appendix I. Dr. Macnamara was interested in John Wilcotes as an ancestor of the Danvers family whose "Memorials" he had compiled. Hundreds, if not thousands of twentieth-century Englishmen must also be descended from the worthy squire, among their number being Eboralls, Jessons, and Chattocks, whose pedigrees I have specially investigated.

shows that he died on the 22nd of May, 1422, forty-one days after making his Will. It is plain from both documents that he had married a second wife named Elizabeth, and that he left her his widow together with two daughters named Elizabeth and Margaret. There can be no doubt that the latter were his children by this second wife, but Dr. Macnamara was mistaken in asserting that they were aged nine and eight respectively at the date of their father's death in 1422. The ages relate to the date of the Inquisition, which was held in October, 1427, and the point is not without importance, because Dr. Macnamara argues that as the eldest daughter of the second wife was aged nine in 1422, therefore Alice, the first wife, must have died about 1410, which would therefore be the date of the brass. The incorrectness of the conclusion, is, I think, shown in the third Appendix, but in any case, this particular argument which supports it seems to be unsound.

Of Alice Wilcotes little can be learned, except from her epitaph, which depicts a woman of gracious and endearing qualities. Not every wife, nor every lady of the manor or Lady Bountiful of the village, earns from her husband such an epitaph as we have here. "A mirror of matronhood, a sure succour to the wretched, a lover of peace," she may well pass for a type of all that was best in the English gentlewoman of the days of Chivalry. Further on, I speak of her ancestry,* and her epitaph also requires separate discussion,† but I give here a reproduction of my rubbing of the motto which occurs again and again on the brass. It is reasonable to suppose that the phrase was a favourite with her, and perhaps chosen by herself for this purpose; and it gives me pleasure to think that the woman whose memory is perpetuated in this beautiful monument was one who could rise above the abject religious supplications customary in her day and generation, and could rest in the broad, solemn dignity of "In one is all."

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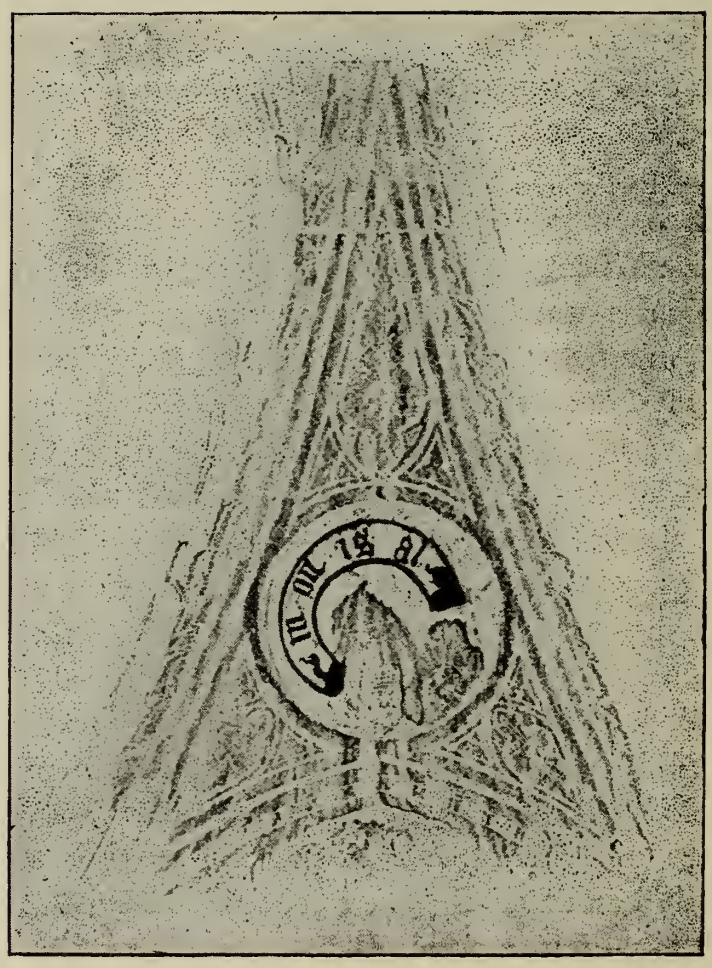
* Appendix II.

† Appendix III.



APPENDIX I.

THE WILCOTES FAMILY.

In January, 1898, Dr. F. N. Macnamara contributed to "The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal" (Vol. III., No. 4, pp. 97—107) a very interesting and valuable paper on "The Wilcotes Family." I put together some notes bearing on what he had written, and laid them aside in consequence of his death; but as they concern the subject of the foregoing description, I may be excused for recording them briefly in these pages.

Dr. Macnamara's paper may be divided into three parts as follows :—

Part I. (p. 98—l. 12 of 101) :—	Sir William Wilcotes, Kn't, of Headington and Northleigh.*
Part II. (p. 101—106) :—	John Wilcotes, Esq., of Great Tew.
Part III. (p. 107) :—	The Preaux or Prewes (de Pratellis) Family.

Part I. With regard to Dr. Macnamara's account of Sir William Wilcotes, what little I have to say is more in the way of enquiry than of criticism. I should be glad to know whether it is certain that this William Wilcotes who "had leave to purchase from the Abbey of S. Ebrulf in Normandy the Manor of Willecote in Gloucestershire (Rot. Pat. 20, Ric. II., part 3, m. 16)," took his name from Wilcotes in Northleigh. From information kindly supplied by the Rev. J. Harvey Bloom, of Whitchurch, Warwickshire, it certainly appears that from 1 Edw. II. to 31 Edward III. there was a local family of Willecote (in Alveston, Gloucestershire), owning property in Stratford on Avon, their pedigree being as follows :—

Ralph de Wylecote in 1 Edw. II., father of
William de Wylecote of 1 Edw. II. to 15 Edw. III., father of
1 Thomas de Wylecote, son and heir 19 Edw. III.
2 William de Wylecote, chaplain 15 and 31 Edw. III.

* In which latter parish is Wilcotes, from which the Family is presumed to have taken its name.

Prima facie it is more probable that one of this family bought Willecote when he had the chance, and also that Simon de Wilecot,† of Pillerton Hersey, Warwickshire, took his name from the Gloucestershire Manor, which is just on the borders of Warwickshire. It has occurred to me that possibly the Willecotes *gave* their name to Wilcotes in Northleigh, which might originally be Willecotes Manor. If, however, J.L.G.M., in his "Notes on the Oxfordshire Domesday," is correct in identifying Wilcotes with the Domesday "Widelicote," then my suggestion falls to the ground, and we must suppose that it was a mere coincidence, or possibly a freak of fancy, which led William Wilcotes to add the Gloucestershire Willecote to his estate.

As to Sir William's Arms, I find in the (Harl. Soc.) Visitations of Oxfordshire, p. 31, that in Northleigh Church there were formerly two representations of the Wilcotes Armorial Bearings, namely :—I., Azure, an eagle displayed argent, beaked and legged or, on its breast an escallop sable. Crest : On a wreath, an eagle's head and wings argent. II., Azure, an eagle displayed argent, beaked and legged or, round its neck a coronet gules. Crest : Issuing from a coronet gules, an eagle's head argent. The second is plainly Wilcotes, of Great Tew. I suggest that the first is the shield of Sir William Wilcotes differenced by a scallop shell derived from the Arms of his wife, Elizabeth Trillow, which were : Argent, a chevron engrailed between three scallop shells sable.

Part II. As to John Wilcotes, of Tew, Dr. Macnamara states *and proves from records* the following facts :—

(1) That he had a first wife named Alice, who had had a daughter Emma, by a former husband, and that by the marriage settlement of John and Alice, Great Tewe was settled upon themselves for life, with remainder to the heirs of their bodies, failing whom on Emma and her heirs, failing whom on the right heirs of John Wilcotes.

(2) That the brass of John and Alice in Great Tewe Church exhibits the Wilcotes Arms (*a displayed eagle ducally gorged*), together with the Arms of Alice (*a displayed eagle*).

(3) That John Wilcotes married secondly, Elizabeth Cheney, and had by her two daughters, who were

† Mentioned by Dr. Macnamara on p. 105.

found to be his heirs in his Inquisition Post Mortem.*

(4) That in his will he mentions his son, Thomas Wilcotes, on whom he settles the Manors of Dene Over Chalcford and Nether Chalcford, only after failure of issue of his (John's) daughter, Margaret.

(5) That in his will he settles the Manor of Great Tewe on his daughter, Elizabeth, and her heirs, failing whom on Sir John Wilcotes and his heirs male.

(6) John Wilcotes' daughter, Elizabeth, married Henry Rainsford, to whom she brought Great Tew, and her sister, Margaret, married John Ashfield, but relinquished Dene and Chalcford to her brother, Thomas Wilcotes.†

Unfortunately, Dr. Macnamara drew some false inferences from the above facts, and also called in to his aid a shockingly bogus pedigree of Rainsford, thus making a serious confusion in this part of his paper, which I will endeavour to correct.

First with regard to the various Rainsford Pedigrees and Quarterings put down by Lee in the (Harl. Soc.) 1574 Visitation of Oxfordshire from the information of the contemporary Rainsford, Dr. Macnamara quotes Lee's own remark that "Though he (*i.e.*, Mr. Rainsford) use his pleasure, neither had I matter (*i.e.*, material, evidence), but wylle for all these coats."

A few minutes examination will show anyone versed in such matters that the whole of these Rainsford pedigrees and memoranda relating to the period before the match with Wilcotes, are not worth the paper on which they are printed.† For example, as Dr. Macnamara noted, Tew Manor is made to pass through some five and twenty successive heiresses! The father of John Wilcotes' first wife is now Edward, and again Thomas! The Arms of Trillow are ascribed to "Arderbourgh," *i.e.*, Adderbury,‡ and claimed as a quartering:—obviously the concoctor believed that a Wilcotes had married a Trillow, but did not know that the Wilcotes who made the match was Sir William, from whom John, his contemporary, could not have inherited the quartering. John Wilcotes had bought

* But Dr. Macnamara calls them John's heirs only as to Great Tew.

† Dr. Macnamara's Paper, p. 104.

† I do not, of course, include in this statement Lee's own notes of Arms and Monuments in Churches and houses.

‡ The Arms of this family were *A fess embattled*, and are to be seen in Adderbury Church to this day.

Dene and the Chalcfords from the Leukenors, to whom they came from the Shareshulls,¶ so down goes the Shareshull coat as a quartering! John's widow marries for a second husband Sir Richard Walksted, so the Walksted Arms are also claimed as due to be quartered! The quarterings for Glanville Lyons and Scocathe I believe to be pure fiction! But I can waste no more time over this rubbish;* it must go; and away with it goes all Dr. Macnamara's authority for describing Alice, Sir John Wilcotes' first wife, as daughter and heir of Thomas or Edward Wilcotes by Elizabeth Hall. For the present we must agree that Alice's parentage is unknown.

I come now to the false inferences drawn by Dr. Macnamara from the six statements of fact he has given correctly as mentioned above. First, then, it is not true, as he states, that John Wilcotes' daughters, Elizabeth and Margaret, were returned as his heirs only in respect to Great Tew. They are found to be his heirs *absolutely*. To make sure of this I examined the original document (I.P.M., 6 Henry VI., No. 41). It states as follows:—

The Inquisition was taken on the feast of S. Simon, 6 Henry VI. (28th Oct., 1427). The Jury found that John Wilcotes, Esq., in his life time held the Manor of Great Tywe, and granted it to Richard Cralle, Esq., of Co. Sussex, Alexander Cheyne, of Co. Kent, and Thomas Frankleyn, and in consequence of the said conveyance, John Wilcotes was not seised of anything either held from the King or from anyone else. Elizabeth, aged nine years and more, and Margaret, aged eight years and more, are his daughters and heirs. A certain Richard Purcell held a water-mill of the fee of John Wilcotes,† and John Hilton also held freely an estate in the same fee, and (I gathered from a necessarily hurried examination) Purcell and Hilton (and perhaps other tenants) had not attorned themselves as tenants to Richard Cralle and the others at the date of John Wilcotes' death. Consequently Richard Walkstede, Knight, and Elizabeth, his wife,‡ had since John Wilcotes' death received the outgoings, rents, &c., of the free tenants who had so failed to attorn.

¶ Third footnote on p. 103 of Dr. Macnamara's paper.

* For some further criticism as to these quarterings *see* "The Genealogist," Vol. I.

† Have we here the explanation of the Purcell quartering assumed by the Rainsfords?

‡ John Wilcotes' widow.

The foregoing Inquisition shows quite clearly that John Wilcotes heirs were his daughters, and Dr. Macnamara's inference (p. 102, line 25) that his son Thomas was the son of his first wife Alice, is shown to be both false and unnecessary. Thomas, without a shadow of doubt, was John Wilcotes' bastard son.

I examined his Inquisition, P.M. (12 Edw. IV., No. 13), which was taken at Wytteney, Oxfordshire, on the day next after the Feast of S. John the Baptist (30th August), before Thomas Fowler, Escheator.

The Jury say that on the day of his decease, Thomas Wylcotes, Esq., held no tenements of the King or of any others. In his lifetime he had been seised of Dene, Over Chalford and Nether Chalford in Oxfordshire, and so seised, he conveyed them to Thomas, Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury . . . . John Bourgchier de Berners, Knight, John [? D]addeford, James Arblaster and Richard Nowers. The said Manors are held from the Abbey of S. Kenelm of Winchcombe, The said Thomas Wylcotes died 15th March, 12 Edward IV. (1472).

No heirs of Thomas are mentioned in the Inquisition, doubtless for the good reason that being a bastard he had none. If any further corroboration of his illegitimacy is desired, it may be found in the fact that he was entirely cut out of all chance of succession to Great Tew, although John tried to keep that estate in the Wilcotes Family. *A fortiori*, Thomas could not have been the son of Alice and John, for had he been, he would, under the settlement, have inherited Great Tew as a matter of right.

Having thus stated the facts correctly, and cleared away the misleading "Rainsford" pedigree-hash with the false inferences consequent upon it, we may now in a few words summarise the results as follows :—

There were two contemporaries bearing the same surname :

WILLIAM WILCOTES, of Northleigh, died 17th Jan., 1411—12 ;

And JOHN WILCOTES, of Great Tew, died 21st May, 1422.

They were certainly relations, and almost certainly brothers, for William left a son, John, who was a Knight, and living in April, 1422, when John Wilcotes, of Great Tew, made his will, settling the reversion of Great Tew on "John Wilcotes, Knight." No other contemporary, "John Wilcotes, Knight," has ever been heard of, and we may assume that the Squire of Tew wished to settle his estate upon his nearest legitimate kinsman in the male line, who was probably his nephew.

Like his [presumed] brother of Northleigh, the before-mentioned JOHN WILCOTES, of Great Tew, evidently married an heiress, and her christian name was Alice. She was the widow probably of some rather obscure person by whom she had had a daughter named Emma. I infer the obscurity of Alice's former husband from the apparently unfair settlement which was made on her marriage with John Wilcotes, whereby Emma's interest in Great Tew (which I consider, and hope to show, was Alice's inheritance) was postponed in favour of the heirs of the body of Alice and her second husband.

In any case, however, Emma evidently died without issue, and Alice also dying, John Wilcotes found himself, under the settlement, absolute lord of Great Tew. He conveyed it to Trustees, and by his will settled it on his daughter Elizabeth and her heirs with remainder to Sir John Wilcotes, Knight, evidently, as I have already stated, the heir male of the family. By his will, John Wilcotes of Tew, also settled Dene and the Chalcfords upon his younger daughter Margaret and her heirs, and gave his illegitimate son Thomas a chance, by placing him next in remainder for those estates. I suspect that this Thomas was handsomely endowed with money instead of lands, for he was doubtless the M.P. for Blechingley as mentioned by Dr. Macnamara (p. 105), and probably purchased Dene and the Chalcfords from Margaret his sister, who, as Dr. Macnamara shows (p. 104), conveyed them to him.

APPENDIX II.

THE FAMILY OF DE PREAUX OR *DE PRATELLIS.*

As appears from Appendix I., John and Alice Wilcotes were in possession of the Manor of Great Tew, and Doctor Macnamara therefore (p. 107) devotes some attention to the earlier descent of that lordship in the family of de Preaux otherwise "de Prewes," or, in Latin *de Pratellis.* His researches were rather among calendars than original documents, and it will therefore, I think, be permissible to make free use of his material, and thus in combination with my own notes, to produce a fuller account of the family from which, in my opinion, Alice Wilcotes descended.

Preaux, more correctly written "Préaux," was a barony in Normandy situate two leagues from Rouen, and was once famous for its Abbey dedicated to S. Peter, which having in early times held estates in England, appears in records on both sides of the Channel. In its original form, the name, I suppose, contained a "t," discarded by the linguistic laziness of the French, but retained in the Latin rendering—*de Pratellis*—of the surname de Preaux; which last, in our English records sometimes appears as "de Prewes." According to Mr. Alfred Dobree,* a Seigneur de Preaux was living on his estate at Darnatel in the year 913, and there was a subsequent lord of Preaux owning the same estate, who accompanied William the Conqueror to England. This "Companion," however, remains unnoticed by Planché, and Mr. Dobree quotes no authorities for these statements, which have the unpleasant flavour of a pestilent Burke-begotten romance. I suspect "Darnatel" of having been evolved from Bernatre, where a certain Jean de Preaux established himself in the thirteenth century! †

It is, however, clear that the de Preaux family was eminent at an early date, and owing to the fact that the Lords and Marquises of Raineval in Picardy from 1198 to 1406 were by male descent de Preaux, the pedigree has been partially investigated by the well-known present-day genealogist, the Marquis de Ruvigny et Raineval.‡ It begins with Osbert, lord of Preaux, who married Matilda daughter of Hamelin, Earl Warenne. This Hamelin was a half-brother to Henry the Second, who brought him to England, married him to the heiress of the de Warennes and conferred their earldom upon him. Osbert and Matilda had several sons, namely:—

1. John, Lord of Preaux, a favourite minister of Richard Cœur de Lion and of King John. He would presumably be the direct ancestor of that "Jean, Seigneur de Preaux," whose son Pierre, according to Mr. Dobree, settling in England in 1365 was father of Jean de Preaux who established himself in Guernsey in 1400. There his descendants remain to the present day, calling themselves Priaulx, and still bearing their ancient arms, *Gules, an eagle displayed or.*

2. Sir William de Preaux, who is said to have saved King Richard's life in the Holy Land.

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* The Genealogical Magazine, I., 543.

† *Ibid*, 468.

‡ In "The Genealogical Magazine," Vol. I., &c.

3. Simon de Preaux, of whom presently; and probably

4. Roger de Preaux, who as brother of John de Preaux witnesses a charter dated 20 March, 1190, whereby Richard I. confirmed a grant to the nuns "de Claro rivo."* Hamelin, Earl de Warenne, stands first among the witnesses, and it is natural therefore to conclude that John and Roger were his grandsons. Roger would undoubtedly be identical with the Roger de Preaux who only eighteen days earlier had witnessed a similar confirmation of King Richard to the Church of Rouen, and was therein described as one of the King's stewards.

5. Peter de Preaux, who also, as brother of John de Preaux, witnesses a charter, dated 7 June, 1200, concerning an exchange given by the Archbishop of Rouen. This would doubtless be that Peter de Preaux, a trusted servant of King John, who in 1203 rescued Queen Isabel from Chinon where the Angevins were preparing to capture her, and conveyed her safely to John at Le Mans. His subsequent services to the King were of a less pleasant description; for he was the first of the commissioners to whom John, on leaving Normandy for England, referred the commandant of Chateau Gaillard for instructions; and he must therefore have negotiated the surrender of that famous fortress. We next find him as commandant of Rouen, which in 1204 he was compelled to cede to Philip of France, John having failed to relieve it within the stipulated forty days.†

Returning now to the above-mentioned third son:—

Simon de Preaux. He may have been identical with that Simon de Preaux, lord of Pierrepont, who made an agreement with the people of that commune in 1183. If so, he had issue:—

1. John de Preaux, who married Beatrice, the heiress of the old line of the Rainevals of Picardy, and in 1199, as Lord of Raineval, of Pierrepont, Coutoire, and many other estates, took the oath of fidelity to Philip Augustus. From John

* Calendar of Documents in France.
† Miss Norgate's "John Lackland."

and Beatrice descended the de Preaux, lords of Raineval, whose direct male line died out in 1406, but they are now represented through descent from various heiresses by the Marquis de Ruvigny et Raineval. Finally, the Marquis states that the ancient arms of the French de Preaux were *Gules, an eagle displayed or*, though as Seigneurs of Raineval they used the Raineval arms, *A cross charged with five silver shells.*

The Historic Muse delights to be excursive, and has led us far from Great Tew; to which if we return mentally in the year 1203, we find John de Preaux possessed of the advowson here, and that two years earlier Ingelram de Preaux had leave to exchange land in the neighbouring township of Bloxham.* It was perhaps earlier still, that at some uncertain date between 1184-1205, Hamon de Preaux witnessed a Charter by Waleran, Earl of Warwick to the Church of S. Peter of Preaux.† Hamon, however, may have been a townsman or cleric of Preaux, and not an English tenant of the Earl, and therefore need concern us no further, and we may attempt our pedigree without him. It begins then with the above :—

John de Preaux of Great Tew in 1203. His lands there were granted to him by Ranulf, Earl of Chester,‡ and his connection with the Norman family of de Preaux and with the above-mentioned Ingelram may fairly be taken for granted. He had a successor, probably his son

Ralph de Preaux—of whom hereafter;

and probably a younger son—

John de Preaux, who in 1249-1250 held a small estate in Great Tew.

Ralph de Preaux, above-mentioned, held in 1249-1250 four carucates of land in Great Tew of the Earl of Arundel by the service of a quarter of a Knight's Fee, and most of the sub-tenants held their lands from him. He appears also to have been Lord of the Manor. He was succeeded by

John de Preaux, probably his son, and described as heir of the first John; ‡ who is found in the Hundred Rolls of 1278 in possession of the same estate. Stephen and Drew de Preaux were then among

* Dr. Macnamara.
† Calendar of Deeds in France. ‡ Patent Rolls, 1332.

the free tenants, and were doubtless his brothers or cousins. John, in 1292, presented a relation named Simon de Preaux to the Church of Great Tew; and in 1300 established what perhaps led to the connection with the Wilcotes family, by appointing John de Trillow as Simon's successor. In the next year he parted with the advowson of Great Tew and part of his land there, to the Abbess of Godstow; and in 1303 entailed his Manor of Great Tew upon his son :—

Ralph de Preaux whose marriage with Alice, daughter of William Joce, of Thorncot, was probably the reason for the settlement. Of Ralph we know that in the tenth year of Edward II., and again in the first of Edward III., he was the principal tax-payer in Great Tew, while in 1332 he obtained a confirmation from the Crown of the entail of 1303. Soon after this he died, and his Inquisition Post Mortem taken in 1333 shows that he left a son and heir :—

William de Preaux, who was aged sixteen. He appears in 1340 and 1345 in connection with Great Tew, as son and heir of Ralph.

From this date down to the twenty-first year of Richard II. (1397-8), when John and Alice Wilcotes made what was doubtless their marriage-settlement, the researches of both Dr. Macnamara and myself have failed to discover anything further concerning the De Preaux and their Manor of Great Tew, except that in 1398, when John and Alice were in possession of it, the Inquisition Post Mortem of Roger Mortimer states that "the heirs of Ralph de Prewes" held of him one Knight's fee in Great Tew. Whether by this "Ralph" the document refers to the father of William or to a possible brother or son, must be for the present uncertain, but it is clear that dates would allow of John Wilcotes of Great Tew being the son of an heiress of de Preaux who might be perhaps sister, less probably daughter or niece, of William.

I think, however, it is almost certain from the evidences drawn up in Appendix I. (p. 15) that he was the *husband* of that heiress, who was of course his wife Alice.

I think so, for the following reasons :—

(1) It is clear that John Wilcotes would have liked to

keep Great Tew in the male line of his family, for though he did not go so far as to deprive both his daughters of it, he did prefer the heir male by making him the remainder-man after Elizabeth and her heirs, to the detriment of the chance of Margaret, the younger daughter.

(2) Therefore he would not, I think, if Great Tew had been his own, have permitted the remainder in favour of his step daughter Emma, which was obviously detrimental to his Wilcotes' kinsfolk, and indeed to his own possible heirs by any subsequent wife.

(3) Therefore I infer that he could not help himself; that Great Tew came with Alice; that she consented to postpone her daughter's claims in the interest of issue which might come to herself and John, but declined to sacrifice those interests in favour of heirs of John not descended from herself.

These arguments are merely inferential, but there is the direct evidence of the quartered shield on the brass in Great Tew Church, which shows that Alice was an heiress.

Further proof that she was an heiress is found in the fact that the brass represents her on her husband's right hand. My attention was drawn to this by Mr. Malleson, the Vicar, who argued from it that she occupied that place in virtue of being Lady of the Manor. No such explanation had occurred to me, but on running through my Dugdale's "Warwickshire," I certainly find that on the monumental brasses of Geoffrey Allesley, Thomas Boughton, Robert Hugford, Sir John Crewe and Thomas Holt, whose wives were all heiresses, the lady in every case appears on her husband's right. Nor could I find any variation of, or exception to the rule that a wife so placed was an heiress, except the case of Katherine, wife of Sir George Throckmorton, and she probably occupied the post of honour because she was a Baron's daughter; her father being Nicholas, Lord Vaux of Harrowden. Moreover, the brass being of Henry the Eighth's time, is no great authority as to mediæval customs. On referring also to Boutell's "Brasses," I observe the same rule holding good, in the cases of Sir John and Lady Katherine Harsick, Richard and Sybil Quatremaynes, Hugh and Lady Joyce Halsham: and here again I find nothing to the con-

trary. One lives and learns; and I see no reason why, because I have only just acquired this knowledge, I should be chary of using it to support the first step in my argument, which is that Alice Wilcotes was an heiress.

There is also direct evidence that she was the heiress of the de Preaux. Lee has recorded* that in Tew Church was the following shield† set up, and over it written :—

"John Wylcotes and Alice his wyfe ob. MCCCC . . . . ."
Arms :—Quarterly, 1 & 4 Azure an eagle displayed argent, ducally gorged or.
2 & 3 Or, an eagle displayed gules.

The first and fourth quarters are obviously John Wilcotes' arms, the tincture of the eagle's collar being gold instead of the gules given above.

The second and third quarters, representing undoubtedly the arms of Alice, are neither more nor less than the arms of Preaux, Prewes or *de Pratellis*, *with the tinctures reversed !*

Although the Heralds, relying on the Rainsford farrago, ascribed another coat, namely, *Or*, *three chevrons interlaced sable*, *on a chief gules three roundels argent*, to the name of Pratell, there is good evidence besides the authority I have quoted, of the Marquis de Ruvigny and of Mr. Dobree, that the Preaux Arms were really *Gules*, *an eagle displayed or*, for Planché's Roll ‡ (temp. Edw. I.) gives the Arms of "Piers de Preaus" as *Gules*, *an eagle displayed or*, *a label of five points azure.*

It may be that Alice was not a Preaux by birth, but the daughter and heiress of a Preaux heiress whose husband assumed the Preaux Arms with the difference of tinctures reversed; it may be that the Great Tew branch of the Preaux Family preferred a slight variation in their arms; or it may be—and this is the most probable explanation—that the herald in taking hurried notes of the church monuments, accidentally reversed the tinctures in his description of the shield. But in any case, even with the tinctures reversed, the coincidence is too remarkable to be the work of chance. We may safely affirm that Alice the wife of John Wilcotes,

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* Harl. Soc., Visitations of Oxfordshire, p. 49.

† I expect that he is referring to the monumental brass on which the heraldic tinctures would be visible in his day.

‡ The Genealogist, N.S. III. 173.

Alice of the monumental brass, the "Matronis speculum, miseris dos, pacis amatrix," was heiress of the de Preaux, and inheritress of their Manor of Great Tew.

THE ARMS OF DE PREAUX.

[*Reproduced from a rubbing of one of the shields above the head of Alice Wilcotes.*]

APPENDIX III.

THE EPITAPH SURROUNDING THE BRASS.

The kindly and much-enduring reader who has already digested the first and second appendixes, may reasonably decline to peruse yet a third. Indeed, I advise him to refrain, unless he still has about him some remnants of his school-days Latinity, and can attempt a little verse-making, although the stimulus of cane and imposition will no longer be applied by some exigent pedagogue. To those who are thus equipped, I can promise an interesting puzzle, and some harmless diversion in attempting its solution. For myself it will be enough gratification if I come somewhere near the truth and do something to help local archæologists present and to come. Nor do I think minute trouble will have been mis-spent on this or any part of my work if I succeed in elucidating the history, explaining the meaning, and illustrating the beauties, of so superb a monument of mediæval religious art.

The Epitaph which surrounds the brass of John and Alice Wilcotes, contained originally, as may be tested by measurements, eight hexameter lines separated by repetitions of the device of a

hand holding a scroll which bears the motto "in on is al." The point where the third line starts shows that the first line occupied the top edge above the canopies, and was between two devices. The second line began exactly at the corner, as the sixth also must have done, and there must have been a device at the end of the eighth line. These points must be established and borne in mind when any attempt is made to restore the missing lines.

Observation of the frontispiece will show that the first, second and sixth lines are utterly gone, while of the others only the third and fourth are complete. It appears however* that the second line can be entirely restored from Rawlinson, M.S. B. 400 c. fol. 299, in the Bodleian Library, and I may therefore set out the restoration problem in the following form, numbering the lines for the purpose of reference.

1. . . . . .
2. *Ejusdem per septenos denosque per annos*
3. *Obsequiis sibi grata nimis nichiloque molestia*
4. *Matronis speculum miseris dos pacis amatrix*
5. *ctobris quintadecima sub luce sub anno*
6. . . . . .
7. . . . . *avit Alicia tata*
8. *Ossa dabantur humo repetebat spirit* . . .

Taking a general view of this composition, it does not appear to me that its author was a very skilful or scholarly versifier, nor does he seem to have supervised the engraver's work with sufficient care. "Molestia" is an undoubted error for "molesta," and I have little doubt that "tata" also is a mistake.

In attempting the work of reconstruction, we must also recognise that the epitaph relates entirely to Alice, and that if her husband appeared it would only be incidentally.

The second line tells us that Alice was . . . . "of the same throughout seventeen years," and the missing word is obviously "wife." "*Ejusdem*" informs us that John Wilcotes' name must have occurred in the first line, which must also have told us who his wife was, and probably stated that one or both of them lay buried beneath. The position of the word *Ejusdem* at the beginning of the second line makes it almost certain that the word used for "wife" came at the end of the first line. Lastly, *Ejusdem* is so formal and lawyer-like, that I expect what went before it was prosaic

* The Journal of the Oxford University Brass-rubbing Society, I. 166.

in the extreme. I therefore offer this reconstruction of line 1,

Johannes jacet hic et Alicia quae fuit uxor,

or, if the critic insists upon the surname,

Johannes Wilcotes jacet hic et Alicia sponsa.

But in the latter form the final "a" in Alicia should be long before the "sp," and I much prefer the first effort, of which the last three words, together with the "*Ejusdem*," make an ordinary legal description.

The next imperfection is in line 5; but it does not require much ingenuity to add the "O" to "ctobris."

Coming to line 6, it seems clear that its beginning must contain the description of the "anno" in the preceding line. This raises the question of what year is referred to. It is evidently the year of Alice's death, and that, as I have shown, need not be 1410 as has been supposed. I consider that John and Alice were married in about 1397-8, when the Great Tew estate was settled by the legal process known as a Fine. It is evident from line 2 of the Epitaph that their married life lasted for seventeen years, which would place Alice's death in about the year 1413-14. Now it would over-tax the ingenuity even of an epitaph-maker to bring "millesimo quadringentesimo tertio decimo" within the scope of a line and a half of hexameter verse which must also contain several other words. I, therefore, decline the attempt, and propose to read

"*Henrici quinti primo*"

as the beginning of line 6.

Before making any further progress, it is necessary to examine the "*avit Alicia tata*" which ends line 7. The last word, "*tata*," has caused much trouble. For the purposes of an ordinary straightforward epitaph such as this, it is not a word at all; though some archæologist appears to have unearthed from the obscurity of low mediæval Latin, a word "*tata*" equivalent to "Mamma." But it seems to me, that after the formal statement of date has appeared, we are only concerned with Alice's death, however much the epitaphist may flourish his phrases concerning it. Moreover, Alice was not conspicuously a "Mamma," and not at all, so far as the Wilcotes family was concerned.

Doctor Macnamara suggests that "*tata*" may represent the name Tate, which he considers might have been the surname of Alice's first husband. But the most unlikely of all places for that worthy to figure in would be the monument set up by her second husband.

I think also that it would be most unusual, if not unexampled, for a surname to be Latinized in the form of an adjective feminine.

A much more sensible suggestion than either of the foregoing, is the proposal to read "*fata*"; the difference between ꞇ (t) and ſ (f) being very slight, and to be accounted for by a trifling negligence on the part of the brass-worker. "Fata," moreover, meaning death, or the sentence of death ordained by the Deity occurs, it is stated by Mr. W. B. Barker* frequently in epitaphs. Accepting this suggestion, the last words of line 7 would run something as follows:

"*sustentavit Alicia fata*," as suggested by Mr. Malleson, or *non evitavit* or *nec vitavit*, *&c.*

I am not, however, satisfied with this suggestion to read "fata." The word is heathenish, and opposed to the spirit in which pre-Reformation epitaphs were composed. When Mr. Barker states that "one seldom finds a monumental inscription in which some reference to the fates may not be found," he is, I am sure, absolutely wrong so far as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are concerned.

As a matter of verse-construction also, I should expect the statement of the fact of Alice's death to be placed as near as possible to the mention of the year, and not after an interval of a line and a half.

I therefore confidently suggest a reading, which, involving nothing strained or anachronistic in sense, and requiring the least possible alteration of the text, may rightly claim to be the best. I propose to read "*tanta*." Examination of the brass shows that the artist was here terribly cramped for space, and I judge that he therefore intended to signify the "n" by a slight mark over the "a." This mark, however, I think he omitted, though it may possibly have been worn off.

To suggest a line which shall include "*tanta*," is not very difficult: the word must plainly relate to what has gone before, and not to the sort of "common form" line which follows. It would be dependent to some extent upon the way in which Alice's death was described; referring to her sufferings, her good qualities, or the like. Bearing this principle in mind, I suggest that her death was described as a triumph, and the *tanta* would then imply that it was so because her virtues were so remarkable, or it would perhaps be merely descriptive of the splendour of the triumph. Either form would be in accord with the general laudatory tone of the Epitaph, and I put forth the following version as in agreement with both, reminding my readers that grammatical construction requires the

* The Journal of the Oxford Brass-rubbing Society, I. 166 (1898).

meaning of the passage to run right on from the "*Matronis speculum*," *&c.*, which forms the nominative of the sentence. Starting then after "*primo*" I continue line 6 as follows :—

coelos habitavit

and propose for line 7 :—

"*Praemia Sanctorum meritavit Alicia tanta.*"

If I desired to refer more explicitly to her qualities, I should alter line 7 to

"*Munera Sanctorum monstravit Alicia tanta*,"

meaning that she showed such saint-like qualities, as to deserve to inhabit Heaven ; but I prefer the former.

The reconstruction of the Epitaph presents no further difficulties, for Mr. Barker's proposal to add "*us astra*" to the last line, seems absolutely unimpeachable.

I here append the whole Epitaph as I have attempted to restore it, and I follow with the best translation I can manage. In line 3, "*Obsequiis sibi grata*" means literally that she was pleasing to herself by the services (she performed for others). "*Nimis*" has, I think, its ordinary meaning of "over-much," and is not merely intensive. It is quite natural to speak of a person as "too unselfish." "*Molestia*" a non-existent word, is of course for "*molesta.*" *Sub luce* is a phrase from Ovid ; "luce" being used for "die," while the "sub" is used idiomatically, and may fairly be translated "on" in reference to a day, and "in" when it refers to a year.

Johannes jacet hic, et Alicia quae fuit uxor
Ejusdem per septenos denosque per annos
Obsequiis sibi grata nimis nichiloque molesta.
Matronis speculum, miseris dos, pacis amatrix
Octobris quinta decima sub luce, sub anno
Henrici quinti primo, coelos habitavit.
Praemia sanctorum meritavit Alicia tanta.
Ossa dabantur humo, repetebat spiritus astra.

Here lies John, and also Alice who was for seventeen years wife of the same John ; a woman harmless toward all, and finding her pleasure even over-much in the kindnesses she did to others. A mirror of matronhood, a sure succour for the wretched, a lover of peace, she entered into heaven on the fifteenth day of October in the first year of King Henry the Fifth. A reward so great, and meet for the saints, Alice well merited. Her body was consigned to the earth ; her spirit returned to the heavens.

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